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REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-12 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, Applicant amends Claims 5 and 6, and cancels Claims 13-17.

Claims 13-17 have been canceled since these claims are directed to a non-elected invention. Applicant reserves the right to file a Divisional Application in order to pursue prosecution of non-elected Claims 13-17.

Applicant appreciates the Examiner's indication that Claim 4 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the features on the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 5 and 6 were objected to for containing minor informalities. Applicant has amended Claims 5 and 6 as suggested by the Examiner. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection.

Claims 1-3, 5-8, and 10-12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tanaka (U.S. 2002/0079981) in view of Takase (JP 2002-270465). Claim 9 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tanaka and Takase, and further in view of Sreeram et al. (U.S. 5,858,145). Applicant respectfully traverses the rejections of Claims 1-3 and 5-12.

Claim 1 recites:

A nonreciprocal circuit device comprising:
a center electrode assembly including a ferrite, a plurality of center electrodes and a plurality of insulating films defining a multilayer structure provided on a surface of the ferrite, and a plurality of side electrodes provided on side surfaces of the ferrite; wherein

each end portion of each of the plurality of center electrodes provided on the surface of the ferrite has a thickness greater than the thickness of the other portions of each of the plurality of center electrodes, and each thicker end portion of each of the plurality of center electrodes is connected to a corresponding side electrode.
(emphasis added)

With the unique combination and arrangement of features recited in Applicant's Claim 1, including the features of "each end portion of each of the plurality of center

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electrodes provided on the surface of the ferrite has a thickness greater than the thickness of the other portions of each of the plurality of center electrodes, and each thicker end portion of each of the plurality of center electrodes is connected to a corresponding side electrode.” Applicant has been able to provide a nonreciprocal circuit device having a greatly improved connection reliability between center electrodes and side electrodes without increasing the thickness thereof (see, for example, the first full paragraph on page 3 of the originally filed specification).

The Examiner alleged that Tanaka teaches all of the features recited in Applicant’s Claim 1, except for the ends of the electrodes connected to the side electrodes being thicker than the other portions of the center electrodes. The Examiner further alleged, “Takase teaches that the connection of conductors sandwiched by insulating films and connected to sidewall connections can be made with the ends of the conductors having a thicker portion where the upper surface of the ends of the conductors are filling a gap formed in between the layers of the insulating film.”

Thus, the Examiner concluded that it would have been obvious “to have modified the Tanaka device to have included filled thicker end portions such as taught by Takase, because it would have provided the advantageous benefit of a simpler manufacturing process by the elimination of processing steps while also improving the electrical properties of the device.” Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Contrary to the Examiner’s allegations, the electrodes 10 of Takase have the same thickness along the entire length thereof (see, Fig. 1 of Takase), including the portions of the electrodes 10 that are connected to the side electrode 11. In other words, Takase clearly fails to teach or suggest any electrode 10 that includes any portion having a thickness that is greater than any other portion of the electrode 10, and certainly fails to teach or suggest the features of “each end portion of each of the plurality of center electrodes provided on the surface of the ferrite has a thickness greater than the thickness of the other portions of each of the plurality of center electrodes, and each thicker end portion of each of the plurality of center electrodes is

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connected to a corresponding side electrode" (emphasis added) as recited in Applicant's Claim 1.

Even assuming *arguendo* that Takase taught or suggested the features of "each end portion of each of the plurality of center electrodes provided on the surface of the ferrite has a thickness greater than the thickness of the other portions of each of the plurality of center electrodes, and each thicker end portion of each of the plurality of center electrodes is connected to a corresponding side electrode," there would have been no motivation to combine the teachings of Takase with Tanaka.

The Examiner alleged that the motivation would have been to provide "the advantageous benefit of a simpler manufacturing process by the elimination of processing steps while also improving the electrical properties of the device." However, as clearly disclosed in Takase (see, for example, paragraph [0007] of the English machine translation of Takase), the elimination of processing steps and the improvement of electrical properties are a result of the configuration of the side electrodes 11, and have absolutely nothing at all to do with the alleged configuration of the inner electrodes 10, which the Examiner alleged correspond to the center electrodes recited in Applicant's Claim 1. Takase fails to teach or suggest any advantages or benefits that are obtained as a result of the inner electrodes 10. Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that there would have been no motivation to combine the teachings of Takase with Tanaka.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Takase in view of Tanaka.

The Examiner relied upon Sreeram et al. to allegedly cure deficiencies of Tanaka in view of Takase. However, Sreeram et al. clearly fails to teach or suggest the feature of "each end portion of each of the plurality of center electrodes provided on the surface of the ferrite has a thickness greater than the thickness of the other portions of each of the plurality of center electrodes, and each thicker end portion of each of the plurality of

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center electrodes is connected to a corresponding side electrode," as recited in Applicant's Claim 1. Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that Sreeram et al. fails to cure the deficiencies of Tanaka and Takase described above.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that Tanaka, Takase, and Sreeram et al., applied alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest the unique combination and arrangement of elements recited in Applicant's Claim 1.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 1 is allowable. Claims 2-12 depend upon Claim 1, and are therefore allowable for at least the reasons that Claim 1 is allowable.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance are solicited.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account No. 50-1353.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: January 29, 2007

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